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S. Deger-Jalkotzy

Defining LH III C Middle at the Cemetery of Elateia-Alonaki in Central Greece

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LH III C CHRONOLOGY AND
SYNCHRONISMS II
LH III C MIDDLE

PROCEEDINGS OF THE INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP HELD AT
THE AUSTRIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES AT VIENNA
OCTOBER 29TH AND 30TH, 2004

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by

SIGRID DEGER-JALKOTZY AND MICHAELA ZAVADIL

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SIGRID DEGER-JALKOTZY

DEFINING LH III C MIDDLE AT THE CEMETERY OF ELATEIA-ALONAKI IN CENTRAL GREECE

The Mycenaean chamber tombs at Elateia-Alonaki¹ were used from LH III A1 to Early/Middle Geometric (DEGER-JALKOTZY – DAKORONIA 1991. – BÄCHLE 2000. – DEGER-JALKOTZY 2004). Such a long use of a Mycenaean cemetery may be called sensational; however, it has the disadvantage that almost no Mycenaean burials were found in situ. Except for a few burials dating from LH III C Late, all remains of Mycenaean burials including the vases were found either pushed aside to the walls and corners of the chambers, or deposited in floor pits of the chambers and dromoi² (DEGER-JALKOTZY 1999, 195). Moreover, according to the anthropological investigation of the skeletal remains the numbers of individuals buried in the tombs were generally high. Therefore it is only for the last phase(s) of the cemetery that pottery seriation based on the sequence of burials can be applied. In most other cases the Mycenaean ceramics from Elateia have to be dated by stylistic analysis.

During LH III A and III B the potters of Elateia followed the general conventions of the time, even if their products already exhibited some distinctive local features (BÄCHLE 2000. – BÄCHLE 2003). During LH III B Late and LH III C Early a considerable number of tombs do not appear to have been used, yet the cemetery was not abandoned: Although it is admittedly difficult to define the characteristics of LH III C Early with burial vases, there is material which can be assigned with confidence to that period (BÄCHLE 2003, 118–120, 121 tab. II). The same is true of several fragments of deep bowls and craters found in the dromos fills (WEISS 1993). The crater fragments of our Fig. 10:3,5 may also have been of that date, even if we prefer to assign them to LH III C Middle.

In contrast to the partial abandonment of the cemetery during the closing years of the palace period and in LH III C Early, the use of the tombs increased again during the subsequent phases of LH III C. In fact, it then reached a pinnacle which lasted until the Early Protogeometric period. During that stretch of time most of the older tombs continued to be in use or were re-used, and new tombs were cut into the Alonaki slope. These facts may certainly be interpreted in terms of a rise in population (DEGER-JALKOTZY 2004). Moreover, from the wealth of the burial gifts – particularly of metal objects, jewellery and a wide variety of small finds (DAKORONIA 2004) – it may be concluded that the people of Elateia then enjoyed a period of considerable prosper-

¹ On the situation of the site and the history of the excavations see DEGER-JALKOTZY – DAKORONIA 1991.

² The dromoi of the Elateia-Alonaki cemetery frequently display a special kind of recipients for secondary burials which may be called “niche-and-pits”. They were cut into the walls and, at the same time, into the floor of the dromos, next to the stomion or at the dromos entrance (sometimes at both sides). Their closures mostly consisted of dry stone masonry similar to that of the stomion.

ity. The number of burial vases, too, is rather high. About 470 vessels were deposited from LH III C Middle through Early and Middle Protogeometric.

Moreover, the burial gifts include an impressive range of imported objects such as amber (EDER 2003), metal ornaments and weapons (DAKORONIA 2004). Prestigious pottery was also imported. These vases are important as they indicate both the geographical range of the external relations of the community and provide a clue to the chronology of the burial contexts.

VASES IMPORTED DURING LH III C MIDDLE AND LATE

1. The Close Style stirrup jar **T. XLIX/16m** (Fig. 1:1) was found in Tomb XLIX/89. This vase is chronologically significant since it was found in a defined context which also included the cylindrical stirrup jar Fig. 3:2 (see below).³ A date in *LH III C Middle/Advanced* of T. XLIX/16m is suggested by the monochrome lower part of the body with reserved thin lines (cf. PODZUWEIT 1992, chapter “Kleine Bügelkanne”), by the rosette on the domed disc, by the lozenge decoration on the handles and by the air-hole on the shoulder. The vase had presumably been imported from a region where the Close Style was at home. It may perhaps not have been made at Mycenae since it does not come up to the refined decoration and the outstanding quality of the Close Style vases from that place.⁴ However, a provenance from the Argolid in general cannot be excluded in view of the excellent execution of the decoration.⁵

2. The fragment **T. LIII/31b** (Fig. 1:3) had once been part of another Close Style stirrup jar. The decoration of shoulder, handle and false neck can be compared to stirrup jars from Mycenae (FURTWÄGLER – LOESCHKE 1886, pl. XXXVIII no. 393) and from Rhodes (cf. *RMDP*, fig. 439:270; for the decoration of the disc see also *RMDP*, fig. 439:271). At Mycenae and Tiryns the mature Close Style is commonly assigned to *LH III C Middle/Advanced*, and this same date has also been suggested for the Rhodian parallels. Therefore the fragment from Elateia should also be assigned to that period.

3. Close Style decoration also appears on the narrow-necked amphoriskos⁶ **T. XXXVIII/9g** (Fig. 1:2). The shape is not alien to the local repertoire at Elateia-Alonaki so that a local imitation of the Close Style cannot be excluded. Moreover, a Close Style stirrup jar found at Delphi in neighbouring Phocis has recently been classified as a local copy (cf. *RMDP*, 783, fig. 308:250). On the other hand the decorative scheme of T. XXXVIII/9g – a combination of triangular patch, running spiral and reserved lines on the monochrome lower part of the body – is very similar to that of an amphoriskos from the Kolonaki cemetery at Thebes, said to have been an Argive import (cf. *RMDP*, 687, fig. 264:205). Moreover, the fabric of T. XXXVIII/9g differs from the local clays of Elateia, so that for the time being we prefer to consider this vase as an import. Clay analysis will solve the matter. Chronologically the vase should be assigned to *LH III C Middle/Advanced*. This date may be used in turn as a clue to the chronology of a few vases which were found in the same context, among them the stirrup jar T. XXXVIII/10d (Fig. 3:3).

³ Tomb XLIX/89 was used from LH III C Middle to Early Protogeometric.

⁴ This point was raised by E. French in the discussion which followed after the presentation of this paper.

⁵ It should be mentioned that many vases from Elateia-Alonaki were affected by concretion, owing to the unfavourable physical conditions of the bedrock in the tombs. This is also true of the stirrup jar under discussion so that its quality may well have been much better at the time when it was deposited in the tomb.

⁶ The shape is called “two-handled jug” in IAKOVIDIS 1969/70, vol. 2, 230–232.

4. The stirrup jar **T. XV/A5** (Figs. 1:7; 2:5) is a remarkable representative of the Octopus Style. The very pale clay betrays a foreign provenance of the vase which, by its shape and decoration, should be dated to *LH III C Middle*. The shape is a well balanced globular-conical version of FS 175; it has tall handles and a tall false neck with a slightly domed disc. The spout did not touch the disc (Fig. 1:7).⁷ Unfortunately, the surface of the vase is badly worn, and some parts of the body have not been preserved at all. Therefore it is difficult to understand the decorative scheme. There was obviously no division between shoulder and body zone. Three pairs of outlined and fringed tentacles with rolled tops coil on the shoulder at both sides of the spout (Fig. 2:5). As they emerge from underneath the spout they suggest that the animal's body – perhaps small-sized – was placed still further down (for octopus bodies placed underneath the spout cf. e.g. IAKOVIDIS 1969/70, vol. 2, colour pls. II–III. – PERDRIZET 1908, 9, fig. 26). One tentacle (fat and outlined, but not fringed) undulates round the belly to the opposite part of the vessel (cf. Fig. 1:7), comparable to the (fringed) tentacles painted on the famous⁸ stirrup jar from Skyros (PARLAMA 1984, pl. 62) and on an OSJ from Ialysos (OT. 10, cf. *RMDP*, fig. 429:189). There are no filling motifs between the tentacles, but below the handle there is a framed loop with semicircles. Opposite the spout an apparently most remarkable creature had been depicted on the shoulder. It may have been a very schematic – or ill designed? – octopus with enormous eyes and two leg-like tentacles protruding from the head (cf. Fig. 2:5). However, not much has been left of the decoration on this side of the vase. The handles are monochrome, while the disc is decorated with garlands of semicircles and a zigzag band. A most unusual addition to the painted decoration consists of several faience beads set across the disc and along both handles. The only instance known to me of a Mycenaean clay vessel with faience inlays is a LH III C Middle composite vase from Ag. Triadha in Elis. It consists of three small vases, one true and two “quasi” stirrup jars. Their shoulders, as well as the top of the basket handle which unites them, carry inlays of glass beads (VIKATOU 1999, 243–244, fig. 12a–b). However, its painted decoration – evenly spaced bands all down the bodies and fringed concentric circles on the shoulders – is typical of LH III C Middle and Late closed shapes from Achaia.⁹

Vases decorated with the octopus motif and dated to LH III C Middle have been found at other sites of Central Greece, as well (Delphi: PERDRIZET 1908, 9, fig. 26. Kalapodi: JACOB-FELSCH 1996, 125–126, pl. 25:40). However, these instances provide no stylistic parallels for the OSJ from Elateia, since the animals and the tentacles are painted in a different way.¹⁰ Therefore one is inclined to ascribe the OSJ from Elateia to a region where the Octopus Style was at home. Moreover, “Mycenaean” type (FS 175) octopus stirrup jars with tall and slender handles and false spout were produced in the islands and in coastal areas of the Aegean.

⁷ Unfortunately, the spout is now lost, see Fig. 2:5.

⁸ The opposite side of this vase carries the representation of a ship (PARLAMA 1984, fig. 32, pl. 62).

⁹ Phases 3–6 in the chronological scheme presented by I. Moschos (cf. below, n. 17). – Birgitta Eder kindly reminded me of two more vases (apparently stirrup jars) from Ag. Triadha which have also been mentioned as carrying inlays of glass beads (VIKATOU 1999, 244). However, nothing more has been reported about them.

¹⁰ The decoration of a stirrup jar fragment from Kynos (see further below) also includes a fat and outlined, undulating band which resembles the fringeless tentacle on the OSJ from Elateia (DAKORONIA 2003, fig. 26). However, the Kynos vase is no OSJ. Its decorative system rather bears a resemblance to the two “Cretan style” stirrup jars T. VIII/A7 and T. VIII/A8 (see below).

However, it cannot be excluded that the octopus stirrup jar from Elateia came from or via the Northwest Peloponnese. As recently reported by I. Moschos, several Minoan style vases of LH III C Middle and Late were found in the cemetery of Portes in Achaia (MOSCHOS forthcoming). They are all made of very pale clay, and several of them carry the hallmarks of the Octopus Style. According to Moschos these vessels were the products of a “Mainland Minoan workshop” which operated “somewhere in mountainous Elis, perhaps in the area of Olympia” (MOSCHOS forthcoming). During LH III C Middle this workshop employed craftsmen who had come from Crete or who had been trained in Crete.¹¹ The products apparently were regarded as luxury objects since they were distributed as far as Spaliareika, Clauss, Chalandritsa in Achaia and Palaiokastros in Arcadia. Moreover, nearly all specimens found in the cemetery of Portes came from an exceptionally rich warrior tomb.¹² – During the later phases of LH III C the workshop continued to produce vases decorated in the Cretan style, but the craftsmen were no longer experienced in executing the Minoan decorative system. Direct Minoan influence had apparently subsided.

In view of the pale clay and the idiosyncratic rendering of the octopus decoration, the OSJ from Elateia may well have been a product of the “Mainland Minoan workshop” as described by I. Moschos. Moreover, the glass bead inlays of the stirrup jar from Elateia and those of the composite vases from Ag. Triadha (see above) may well have derived from the same source of inspiration: Ag. Triadha was situated in the area where the “Mainland Minoan workshop” operated. As a matter of fact, several vessels of the workshop were found at this site, too. However, clay analysis will have to reveal whether or not our presumption is correct.

The octopus stirrup jar was found in a niche in the dromos of Tomb XV/86, together with five more vases. Its date in LH III C Middle may serve as a clue to the chronology of this group (see further below).

5.–7. Tomb VIII/86 yielded three imported stirrup jars. Their find contexts are not clear because the burials had been disturbed by the collapse of the tomb.

The two stirrup vases **T. VIII/A7** (Fig. 1:5) and **T. VIII/A8** (Fig. 1:6) have much in common. They are of globular-conical shape with a wide diameter and flattened shoulder, providing ample space for decoration. The discs of the false mouths have a high cone. The spouts are tall, that of T. VIII/A8 is even taller than the false mouth. The everted rims of the spouts touch the discs. The base-ringed feet are raised. Except for their lower parts, both vases are densely covered with pleonastic decoration. The intricate patterns are composed of large curved triangles and vertical panels filled with cross-hatched lozenges, triangles and angle-fillings, as well as with concentric arcs. Below the decorative zone and around the foot both vases are banded. The discs are decorated with spirals. The handles of T. VIII/A7 carry cross-bars, while those of T. VIII/A8 are monochrome. The spout in both cases is decorated with cross-bars. False neck and spout in each case are separately banded.

At first sight these two vases appear to represent Minoan stirrup jars of the so-called “Cretan Close Style” of the later part of LM III C. In fact, they do resemble some stirrup jars from Central East and East Crete either in decoration (KANTA 1980, figs. 33:9 [Kera]; 82:4 [Mouliana]) or in the deep decorative zone (KANTA 1980, fig. 24:1 [Erganos]).

¹¹ I am most grateful to I. Moschos for having supplied me with more detailed information about this new and surprising facet of the ceramics from Achaia which certainly will shed a new light on the development of the mature LH III C style in West Achaia.

¹² Personal communication I. Moschos. On the warrior tomb from Portes, with references, cf. DEGER-JALKOTZY 2006.

However, on closer inspection the shoulder decorations of most LM III C vases generally do not stretch to below the belly zone.¹³ In fact, among the Minoan stirrup jars published so far there is no convincing parallel for the two vases from Elateia.¹⁴ Moreover, a certain resemblance can be detected between the two stirrup jars from Elateia and the stirrup jar fragment already mentioned from Kynos (DAKORONIA 2003, fig. 26).¹⁵ The patterned decoration of this vase covers almost three quarters of the surface, and the lowest part of the body is banded. Moreover, the space enclosed by the undulating, “tentacle-like” fat and outlined band mentioned earlier (see above, n. 10) is filled with motifs and patterns that bear a striking resemblance to those of the two stirrup jars from Elateia (cf. our Fig. 1:5–6 with DAKORONIA 2003, fig. 26). The decoration of the vase from Kynos may well have been inspired by pottery products from Crete, and the same applies to the “Minoanising” motifs enclosed by the waves of the “tentacle”. However, the piece itself was made in the East Locris (MOMMSEN – HEIN – ITTAMEIER – MARAN – DAKORONIA 2001). This explains why the octopus design was clearly misunderstood. In view of the close resemblance between these filling motifs and the decorative patterns of the two stirrup jars from Elateia, it cannot be excluded that the latter had been imported not from Crete, but from East Locris, or from another region where “Cretan style” stirrup jars were produced. Local production cannot be excluded either,¹⁶ even if it seems rather unlikely. Again clay analysis will perhaps provide the answer.

The fragment from Kynos has been dated to LH III C Middle (DAKORONIA 2003, 45 and n. 22). As for the two vases from Elateia, a date in LH III C Middle/Advanced is suggested by their form and decorative system.

Despite its poor state of preservation **T. VIII/A3** (Fig. 1:4), the third imported stirrup jar found in Tomb VIII/86 clearly was imported from West Achaia. It has a wide ring base and a slightly sloping shoulder, and the largest diameter is placed high on the body. The shoulder decoration consists of fringed concentric semicircles flanking the spout and a fringed triangle with scale pattern on the main face. Except for its lowest part, the body is covered with a close evenly spaced banding. Stirrup jars of this kind have been dated by P. A. Mountjoy to LH III C Late (MOUNTJOY 1990, 267–270). However, according to I. Moschos (pers. comm.) this type already started in LH III C Middle. In fact, a good parallel for our vase is provided by two stirrup jars from Voudeni assigned by Moschos to his Phase 4, *LH III C Advanced–LH III C Late*.¹⁷ Like the vase from Elateia, they are not banded all down the body, and the shoulders are decorated with homogeneous and well balanced patterns.¹⁸ Therefore a similar chronology may be assigned to T. VIII/A3. This date comes close to that of the two “Cretan Style” stirrup jars which were also found in Tomb VIII (see above).

¹³ This also applies to the Moulana stirrup jar illustrated in KANTA 1980, fig. 82:4.

¹⁴ This also applies to the Laconian stirrup jar dated to LM III C Late/Subminoan by P. A. Mountjoy (*RMDP*, fig. 100:242). It is no parallel at all for the two vases from Elateia (*pace RMDP*, 818).

¹⁵ I would like to thank Birgitta Eder and Reinhard Jung for drawing my attention to this fragment and for discussing with me the two stirrup jars from Elateia.

¹⁶ A Minoanising stirrup jar from Balitis on Skyros apparently also was a local product. The vase is similar to the two stirrup jars from Elateia in shape and decorative syntax, even if its appearance is more provincial (PARLAMA 1984, fig. 33, pl. 65:10).

¹⁷ These vases were illustrated in the handout to the paper of I. Moschos, pl. 11:1,3. – I. Moschos was not able to attend to the workshop *in persona*. He sent his paper – which kindly was read by M. Petropoulos – and the handouts accompanying the paper. Mr. Moschos is preparing an extended version of his paper for publication with the proceedings of the next workshop.

¹⁸ *RMDP*, 404 also considers a date in LH III C Middle for banded vases with a reserved lower part of the body.

8. The large two-handled amphora **T. XII/A4** (Fig. 1:8) found in Tomb XII/87 came from Achaia, too. It has a globular-conical shape with a low and very wide ring base; the tall and straight neck has an everted rim with flat lip. The hard and dark brownish red fabric is a typical product of Achaia (DEGER-JALKOTZY 2003, 64). The vase is covered with dark paint, except for a small zone on the shoulder decorated with flat concentric arcs and the reserved lip decorated with cross bars. According to the settlement evidence from Aigeira monochrome large vessels already occur in LH III C Early (DEGER-JALKOTZY 2003, 61). However, the present vessel should be assigned to *LH III C Late* on account of its shape and of its decorative system. It may be assigned to Phase 5, “Late Achaia Style”, dated by I. Moschos to LH III C Late (MOSCHOS handout [cf. n. 17], pl. 12:11–12. – See also PAPADOPOULOS 1978/79, figs. 62d; 63a; 64b).

Thus the evidence of the imported pottery implies that the external relations of Elateia had not come to a close at the end of the 13th century B.C. They were renewed during LH III C Middle, at the latest, and then obviously continued into LH III C Late.

LOCAL POTTERY OF LH III C MIDDLE AT ELATEIA

I. General observations

I.1. As already stated more than 470 *burial vases* found in the tombs of Elateia cover the span of time from LH III C Middle through Early and Middle Protogeometric. Of these 430 were wheelmade. Closed shapes predominate by far. The most frequent shapes among the burial vases were amphoriskos (28,6%), small jug (22,5%) and stirrup jar (17%). Open shapes are exceedingly rare. Two kalathoi and one tray, all dating to LH III C Late, were found complete, and a few fragments had been left from further specimens of these shapes.

In contrast, the pottery remains found in the *dromos fills* predominantly belonged to open shapes such as craters, kylikes, cups and bowls. Several of them have been treated by A. Weiss (WEISS 1993). Otherwise this material is still under study. Some fragments from craters of LH III C Middle are illustrated in Figs. 10–11. Fragments of closed shapes found in the dromos fills almost invariably came from burial vessels which had been either transferred from the chamber to a secondary burial in the dromos (see above, p. 129 and n. 2), or thrown away.

I.2. The pottery production of Elateia did not follow the general stylistic developments of LH III C Middle in every respect. For instance, the monochrome amphoriskoi FS 59 faithfully mirrored the over-regional developments of this decorative scheme in LH III C Middle and Late (see further below, p. 136). In contrast, the characteristic styles of LH III C Middle were not adopted although they were known from imported vessels. This is particularly true of the Close Style and the Octopus Style, as we have seen. Knowledge of the Pictorial Style is occasionally reflected by several crater fragments from the dromos fills, carrying motifs such as fish (Fig. 10:2) and bird (WEISS 1993, fig. 25:177). A motif painted on the crater fragment Fig. 10:4 may vaguely recall the tentacles of an octopus, but it certainly cannot be assigned to the Octopus Style. It cannot even compare with the octopus depicted on a crater from neighbouring Kalapodi (JACOB-FELSCH 1996, 125–126, pl. 25:40). Moreover, narrative pictorials such as the dramatic fighting scenes depicted on the craters from Kynos (DAKORONIA 1999) did not occur on such vessels,¹⁹ although a fair amount of pottery seems to have been imported from that place (cf. Figs. 10:1,6; 11; on the stirrup jars T. VIII/A7–A8 see above, p. 132–133).

¹⁹ Only two sherds have been found which seem to show pictorial representations of a narrative character involving chariots. They are under study by Fanouria Dakoronia.

1.3. Under these premises the synchronisation of the local pottery with the general phasing system(s) as proposed for LH III C Middle and Late meets with difficulties. Imported vases therefore prove useful, particularly in well defined contexts. They may indicate the chronological setting of the local vessels associated with them. As we have seen, they mostly date to LH III C Middle/Advanced and III C Late.

A group of vases found in *niche Z* in the western dromos wall of Tomb XV/86 (Fig. 2) may serve as an example. The six vases come from a closed context. Apart from the imported octopus stirrup jar T. XV/5 (Fig. 2:5) datable to LH III C Middle (see above, p. 131–132), there were three darkground amphoriskoi with reserved zones and/or reserved lines (A1–A3: Fig. 2:1–3), a stirrup jar with evenly spaced banding of the body (A4: Fig. 2:4), and a based straight-sided alabastron decorated with what may be called a local elaborate style (A6: Fig. 2:6). For this group some authors might advocate a date in LH III C Late. However, the chronological framework is set by the stirrup jar T. XV/5 of LH III C Middle. Moreover, in terms of the four-part chronological system of the Argolid the monochrome amphoriskoi would qualify for a date in LH III C Middle/Advanced (Fig. 2:1,3) or LH III C in general (Fig. 2:2, see further below). On balance, it appears adequate to assign the group to LH III C Advanced. It should also be added that the locally made vases of this group correspond to the bulk of LH III C funerary pottery at Elateia. Thus their date of LH III C Advanced has a certain bearing on the general chronology of the Elateia-Alonaki cemetery, too.

II. Specific features of LH III C Middle pottery at Elateia

While the pottery from LH III A through III C Early from Elateia has been published by Anna Bächle (see BÄCHLE 2000. – BÄCHLE 2003. – BÄCHLE 2006), the pottery of the subsequent periods is still under study. Therefore our observations should be regarded as a preliminary. At the present stage of investigation the pottery of LH III C Middle appears to be characterised by the following features.

II.1. Pottery shapes

As mentioned previously, in LH III C the most frequent pottery shapes were the amphoriskos FS 59, the small jug FS 115 and the stirrup jar (mainly FS 175). The small jugs are of little chronological significance except for the fact that monochrome specimens became predominant during the closing phases of LH III C Late (cf. DAKORONIA – DEGER-JALKOTZY – REUER-FABRIZII 2002, figs. 2; 7). As for amphoriskoi and stirrup jars, the exact percentages have not yet been established. It may turn out that amphoriskoi became more numerous in LH III C Late and Submycenaean than they had been during the previous period. Nevertheless, in LH III C Middle they already seem to have been equal in frequency to the stirrup jar. In this respect Elateia compares well with e.g. Ialysos on Rhodes where almost equal numbers of stirrup jars and amphoriskoi of LH III C were found (MEE 1982, 30–38). In the cemeteries in Kephallonia, too, amphoriskoi were generally numerous in LH III C, coming third in frequency after small jars and the stirrup jars (SOUYOZOGLOU-HAYWOOD 1999, 64–67). On the other hand, the evidence from Elateia sharply contrasts with that from Medeon in neighbouring Phocis (MÜLLER 1995), as well as from the cemeteries of Achaia (PAPADOPOULOS 1978/79. – See also PETROPOULOS this volume) and of Skyros (PARLAMA 1984, 368–371), where amphoriskoi were by far outnumbered by stirrup jars and other shapes. Even among the finds from the tombs at Perati the ratio between amphoriskoi and stirrup jars was about 1:2 (IAKOVIDIS 1969/70, vol. 2, 153, 198).

Therefore the **remarkable frequency of amphoriskoi** may be defined as a characteristic feature of LH III C Middle at Elateia. The prevalent shape is **FS 59**. It has a raised base ring and a sharply everted neck. The neck is commonly narrow, while wide necks

(cf. Figs. 2:1; 9:2) may have been a reminiscence of LH III C Early shapes. However, the shaping of the body is no longer dumpy. It is always well proportioned, varying from globular-biconical to depressed globular. The largest diameter is never placed below the middle of the vase. As already pointed out by C. Podzuweit, shape and position of the handles are of no chronological relevance (PODZUWEIT 1992, chapter “Amphoriskos”). – The rate between lightground and darkground decorated types is about 50:50.

II.1.1. Amphoriskoi with darkground decoration. – Completely monochrome amphoriskoi are extremely rare. One piece has been assigned to LH III C Developed rather than to III C Early on account of its slightly depressed globular body and sharply everted neck (BÄCHLE 2003, 21, fig. 8:80 = our Fig. 7:1). – In most other cases the lower part of the body is left unpainted (cf. Figs. 2:1,3; 9:4). In addition (or alternatively) there is a narrow zone between the handles which carries simple patterns such as stripes (Fig. 2:1), dots (Figs. 2:2; 9:2) and joining semicircles (Figs. 2:2; 9:1). Several reserved lines may be added below the neck (Fig. 9:2). Reserved rims may be dotted or decorated with vertical strokes (Fig. 9:3–4).

In the Argolid these features are said to have been characteristic of open and closed shapes of LH III C Middle/Advanced (PODZUWEIT 1983, 392. – PODZUWEIT 1992, chapters “Monochromer Skyphos”, “Amphoriskos”, “Kleine Bügelkanne”). Therefore this date would appear appropriate for the three amphoriskoi A1–A3 from Tomb XV/86 (Fig. 2; on A2, however, see below), as well as to the vases of Fig. 9.

However, some monochrome amphoriskoi with reserved zones such as T. XXXVI/38b (Fig. 9:2), T. XV/A2 (Fig. 2:2) and T. XXIV/23g (Fig. 9:1) may well have been produced earlier. The reserved fields between the handles are decorated with simple patterns that had already been in use in LH III C Early. Moreover, these vessels are coated all down the body. The small reserved band at the very edge of the foot of T. XXXVI/38b is a feature that already occurs in Lefkandi Phase Ib (cf. POPHAM – MILBURN 1971, pl. 51:1) and Aigeira Phase Ib (DEGER-JALKOTZY 2003, fig. 4:2), both now re-dated to LH III C Early–Developed (*RMDP*, 714 n. 487. – DEGER-JALKOTZY 2003, 67). – In addition, T. XXIV/23g has a stemmed conical foot, borrowed perhaps from the stemmed bowl (BÄCHLE 2003, 24). The closest parallels are provided by lightground decorated stemmed amphoriskoi from Kladeos/Trypes in Elis (*RMDP*, fig. 136:73. – BÄCHLE 2003, 24–25) and from Perati (IAKOVIDIS 1969/70, vol. 3, pl. 63α), all dated to LH III C Early.²⁰

The stylistic development of the darkground amphoriskos FS 59 with reserved zones, fields and bands is illustrated in Fig. 9. As has been argued above, there are a number of reasons to assign the pieces of Fig. 9:1–2 (and Fig. 2:2) to LH III C Middle in general. In contrast, the amphoriskoi of Fig. 9:3–4 (and Fig. 2:1,3) exhibit stylistic features which clearly point to LH III C Advanced and may well have continued into an early phase of LH III C Late. During the later part(s) of LH III C Late the well proportioned shapes disintegrated, and vessels assumed a baggy appearance (cf. Fig. 9:5). The clay of these late vases is often pale, the fabric poor.

In conclusion it should be pointed out again that, while the flamboyant decorative styles of LH III C Middle were not adopted at Elateia (see above, p. 134), the monochrome decoration of amphoriskoi generally followed the over-regional stylistic developments.

II.1.2. Pattern decorated amphoriskoi. – Like the monochrome amphoriskoi, their lightground decorated counterparts are characterised by well balanced shapes. Accord-

²⁰ The region of Achaia has produced a considerable number of stemmed stirrup jars (cf. PAPADOPOULOS 1978/79, figs. 104a; 107d; 113d) which can be assigned to Phase 3 (LH III C Developed and Advanced) of the chronological scheme put forward by I. Moschos (cf. above, n. 17).

ing to A. Bächle the vessels of Fig. 7 (= BÄCHLE 2003, fig. 8:80,23,62,50) should be assigned to the earlier part of LH III C: The shapes are globular biconical rather than depressed, the ring bases are slightly raised (note, however, that Fig. 7:2 still has a concave base), the necks are sharply everted. Moreover, the shoulder decoration extends to below the zone of the largest diameter, and large broad wavy lines (Fig. 7:4) did not occur until LH III C Middle (PODZUWEIT 1992, chapter “Amphoriskos”). On the other hand decorative motifs such as linear patterns (Fig. 7:2), running spirals (Fig. 7:3) and FM 57 “net” (BÄCHLE 2003, fig. 8:208) still hark back to LH III C Early and even earlier. On balance, a date in LH III C Developed of these vases, as proposed by Anna Bächle, stands to reason (BÄCHLE 2003, 21–23, with comparisons).

Throughout LH III C Middle and Late the light ground decoration of amphoriskoi remained unassuming, if not dull. Motifs were limited to wavy line, net, lozenges, chevrons and concentric arcs. Intricate patterns are absent. Altogether it is obvious that the production of these vessels was not inspired by the LH III C Middle pleonastic styles of other regions.

However, it cannot be denied that in several cases a fine interplay between shape and decoration was achieved. A good example is provided by the vessels of Fig. 8:4–6. Their shape now is truly depressed globular, the handles are set on the belly, and a heavy decorative system covers two thirds of the surface of the vase: The neck is monochrome in and out, and the zone between the handles is filled with the net pattern FM 57 framed by broad bands above and below. In addition, the uppermost part of the shoulder below the neck may also be filled with further bands (Fig. 8:4), isolated concentric semicircles (Fig. 8:6), or yet another net pattern (Fig. 8:5). The net pattern of the handle zone extends to the largest diameter of the vessel, so that the bands underneath partly enclose the lower part of the body.

Amphoriskoi of this type are quite numerous at Elateia. In contrast, convincing parallels from other regions are sought in vain. Thus, unless more relevant materials from neighbouring regions or from further afield will be revealed, these vases may be regarded as a characteristic feature of the local pottery of LH III C. The earliest piece has been attributed to LH III C Middle/Developed by A. Bächle (BÄCHLE 2003, fig. 8:208). However, the majority should generally be dated to LH III C Middle. Moreover, the decoration of T. XXXVI/38d1 (Fig. 8:6) shows a feature which precludes any chronology of earlier than LH III C Advanced: The two sides of the vase are decorated with different patterns (net pattern vs. stacked zigzag) in the zone between the handles. A darkground amphoriskos from Naxos-Kamini dated to LH III C Middle displays the same feature (RMDP, fig. 384:8).

A further group of pattern decorated amphoriskoi is covered with evenly spaced bands down to the lower part of the body (cf. Figs. 5:2; 8:3). However, this decorative system is not confined to this shape. It will therefore be discussed in the following paragraph.

II.2. Vases decorated with evenly spaced stripes

The LH III C Middle pottery of Elateia shows a general predilection for covering the body of closed shapes with evenly spaced stripes/bands. Of course, this decorative system was practised in many other regions, too. However, the ceramic production of Elateia stands out by the remarkably high number of vessels decorated in this way, and by the fact that this decorative pattern was firmly incorporated into the local repertoire. It was applied to stirrup jars, alabastra (both rounded and straight-sided), pyxides (= ring based straight-sided alabastra), amphoriskoi and lekythoi.

Successive banding of vases was executed in two ways: The bands were either of equal width (Figs. 4–5), or the surface of the vase was covered with successive groups of broad bands alternating with multiple thin lines (Figs. 6; 8:1–3).

II.2.1. Vases decorated with bands of equal width (Figs. 4–5). – This decorative system is not just linear. It consists of bands of equal width by which the vase is covered from the shoulder down to well below the largest diameter or two-thirds of the body, or all down to the base.

This kind of banding had no forerunners in LH III A and III B at Elateia. In fact, it was not even a standard feature of Mainland Mycenaean pottery until late in LH III B: First occurrences in LH III B have been reported e.g. from Elis (cf. *RMDP*, fig. 134:54,58) and Achaia (*RMDP*, fig. 145:44). In Boeotia the first vases decorated with successive bands of equal width were found in contexts of LH III B2 (Thebes Palace: ANDRIKOU 2006, 40, pl. 18:295). It has been observed that the pattern is reminiscent of Minoan pottery styles, particularly with regard to the stirrup jars (cf. ANDRIKOU 2006, 40. – For an actual Minoan import in LH III B see *RMDP*, fig. 257:135 [Thebes-Kolonaki]). In fact, it may well have been another Minoan feature as detected by J. Rutter in earliest LH III C assemblages of the Mainland (RUTTER 2003). At any rate, from LH III C Early onwards it was widely used in the Mycenaean regions, preferably for the decoration of stirrup jars and alabastra.²¹ In Achaia closed shapes decorated with bands of equal width even became one of the typical features of the local pottery styles until the very end of Mycenaean pottery tradition (*East Achaia*: PETROPOULOS this volume. – DEGER-JALKOTZY 2003, fig. 5:1. *West Achaia*: MOSCHOS forthcoming and handout [cf. above, n. 17]).²² In contrast, vases decorated with bands of equal width seem to have remained unknown in the Argolid until LH III C Middle (PODZUWEIT 1983, 383–384. – PODZUWEIT 1992, chapter “Amphoriskos”).

At Elateia this decorative pattern was almost absent in LH III C Early, probably due to the general scarcity of pottery assignable to this period (see above, p. 129). Only for the three-handled piriform jar/stemmed amphoriskos of Fig. 5:1 a date in LH III C Early has been suggested (BÄCHLE 2003, 25, with comparative material²³). The body is covered all over with bands. Width and spacing of the bands are not entirely even, but the intention is clear.

The date of all other vases illustrated in Figs. 5:2–6 and of the stirrup jars in Fig. 4 is LH III C Middle, or Middle to Late. The stirrup jar T. XXIV/23v (Fig. 4:1) has a striking parallel from the tombs at Nikoleika near Aigion (PETROPOULOS this volume, fig. 26), even with regard of the pale yellowish colour of the clay. In both cases the shape is clumsy, the decoration of the shoulder (foliate band?) unskilful. M. Petropoulos has dated his vase to LH III C Middle/Developed (PETROPOULOS this volume). For T. XXIV/23v from Elateia this date is precluded. It is true that, due to the flat base, the shape is FS 174 rather than FS 175, and the banding only covers two-thirds of the body: On the other hand the straight and tall spout touches the disc of the false mouth. Therefore a date in LH III C Middle/Advanced appears more adequate.

²¹ *Phocis*: MÜLLER 1995, pls. 49:A55; 67:A247 (Medeon). *RMDP*, fig. 304:183 (Delphi). – *Boeotia*: ANDRIKOU 2006, pl. 18:295. *RMDP*, fig. 261:179 (Thebes). *RMDP*, fig. 260:164 (Eutresis). – *Attica*: IAKOVIDIS 1969/70, vol. 3, pl. 98γ (Perati). *RMDP*, fig. 209:332 (Perati-Steiria). *RMDP*, fig. 211:353 (Hymettos Cave). – *Laconia*: *RMDP*, fig. 94:158 (Sykea). – *Elis*: *RMDP*, fig. 135:70 (Renia). – *Euboea*: POPHAM – SCHOFIELD – SHERRATT 2006, figs. 2.2.1; 2.32.6 (Lefkandi). – *Skyros*: PARLAMA 1984, figs. 47:54; 53:61–62; 54:63; pl. 69:17. – For *Cyclades* and *Dodecanese* see e.g. KOEHL 1984, fig. 6:1 (Paros). *RMDP*, figs. 450:85; 451:86 (Kos). BENZI 1992, pls. 94o–p; 113a. *RMDP*, 426:171 (Rhodes: III C Early–Middle/Developed).

²² The new evidence presented by Petropoulos and Moschos does not affect P. Mountjoy's observations on the late manifestations of this style (MOUNTJOY 1990, 267–270), except for the fact that regular banding of closed shapes was already introduced in LH III C Early and remained in fashion throughout LH III C.

²³ As distinct from the monochrome stemmed amphoriskos of Fig. 9:1, this vase was most probably set on top of a kylix stem. For stemmed amphoriskoi of this type see JUNG 2002, 167–169, fig. 62.

The disc of T. XXIV/23v deserves attention. It is decorated with a stemmed spiral which may be described either as painted fat or as reserved thin. This pattern – which is also found on the stirrup jar T. XLIV/10ai (Fig. 3:1) and on the cylindrical stirrup jar T. XLIX/16k (Fig. 3:2) – is also attested by stirrup jars of LH III C Early–Middle from Rhodes (*RMDP*, figs. 431:208; 432:215; 433:217) and from Attica (*RMDP*, fig. 211:353).²⁴ Above all, a fair number of stirrup jars of LH III C Middle from Medeon in Phocis carry this spiral pattern not only on the disc but also on the base. Sylvie Müller has included this feature in what she describes as “Style de Médéon” (MÜLLER 1995, 273–274, and, e.g., pls. 50:A57,60–62; 56:A131,133,135–137,139). At Elateia the motif may well have been borrowed from there.

The sparse decoration of T. LVI/23ka (Fig. 4:2) and the shaping of spout and false mouth might suggest a date in LH III C Developed. However, the widest diameter is placed well above the middle of the vase, and the lower body is pronouncedly conical. Therefore a general date in LH III C Middle is to be preferred. The elliptic shape and the oblong – albeit idiosyncratic – arrangement of the decoration of the false mouth are reminiscent of the OSJ T. XV/A5 (cf. Fig. 2:5).

The two alabastra of Fig. 5:3 (straight-sided) and 5:6 (rounded) should be assigned to LH III C Middle in general (for discussion see BÄCHLE 2003, 37–38, 41–42), and the same is true of the lekythos Fig. 5:4. – For the stirrup jar T. XV/A4 (Fig. 4:3) and T. VI/A3 (Fig. 4:4) a date in LH III C Middle/Advanced may be suggested on account of their well-balanced shapes (T. XV/A4: globular-conical; T. VI/A3: globular-biconical) with slightly sloping shoulders. T. XV/A4 moreover has monochrome handles, an early feature. On the other hand, their straight and tall spouts are generally considered to be a feature of LH III C Late. However, in some regions such as Achaia (cf. *RMDP*, fig. 148:79), Phocis (cf. *RMDP*, fig. 304:182–183,185) and Rhodes (*RMDP*, figs. 432:209; 439:269) tall spouts meeting the false mouth already occurred from LH III C Early onwards. It may also be remembered that T. XV/A4 was one of the vases found in niche Z of Tomb XV/86 and dated to LH III C Advanced, cf. above, p. 135. – The pyxis (based straight-sided alabastron) Fig. 5:5²⁵ and the amphoriskos Fig. 5:2 could be assigned either to LH III C Advanced or to an early phase of LH III C Late. As we have seen this ambiguity in classification applies to many LH III C Middle/Advanced vases from Elateia. – Finally, the two stirrup jars of Fig. 4:5–6 may be classified as LH III C Late on account of their shoulder decoration; it should be noted, however, that Fig. 4:5 displays earlier features such as a low ring base and monochrome decoration of handles and false mouth. In contrast, the shape of Fig. 4:6 is definitely LH III C Late.

In sum, vases decorated with bands of equal width were remarkably popular at Elateia. The decorative system was perhaps first stimulated by contacts with regions such as Phocis, Achaia and Skyros where it had already been amply practised in LH III C Early. In fact, there are some other features, too, which the banded vases of Elateia shared with the pottery of these regions: Monochrome discs of stirrup jars occur at Elateia (Fig. 4:4–5),²⁶ at Nikoleika near Aigion (PETROPOULOS this volume, figs. 15; 22)

²⁴ At Tiryns a reserved version of this spiral was applied on the inside of a monochrome deep bowl dated to LH III C Advanced (PODZUWEIT 1983, 375, fig. 5:14).

²⁵ For a close parallel dated to LH III C Middle or Middle/Late from Nikoleika see PETROPOULOS this volume, figs. 10; 36.

²⁶ On the vases from Elateia the monochrome discs have a reserved centre. The same decoration recurs on the discs of stirrup jars from Perati-Steiria (*RMDP*, fig. 220:448) and from Ialysos (*RMDP*, fig. 433:216). According to *RMDP*, 572 it is a Minoan feature.

and in Kephallonia (SOUYOUDZOGLOU-HAYWOOD 1999, 68, fig. 10B.g),²⁷ and the decoration of the disc of the stirrup jar of Fig. 4:1 has close parallels at Medeon in Phocis, as already mentioned. Moreover, the LH III C pottery from Elateia had much in common with the ceramics from East Achaia (cf. PETROPOULOS this volume), Phocis (*RMDP*. – MÜLLER 1995) and Skyros (PARLAMA 1984), as will be demonstrated on further occasions. However, the continuing frequent use of evenly spaced banded decoration at Elateia in LH III C Middle and Late was only paralleled in Achaia (PAPADOPOULOS 1978/79. – PETROPOULOS this volume). In Phocis (*RMDP*, figs. 311:285; 312; 313:294), Skyros (PARLAMA 1984, cat. nos. 5, 79, 82) and Kephallonia (SOUYOUDZOGLOU-HAYWOOD 1999, pls. 3:A1143; 4:1313) it was used until LH III C Late, but on a much more reduced scale.

II.2.2. Vases covered with successive groups of bands alternating with thin horizontal lines. – The basic system of covering stirrup jars and other vases with a sequence of bands alternating with multiple thin horizontal lines (Figs. 6; 8:1–3) clearly took its origin from the decorative patterns of closed vessels in LH III A and III B. Like in most other regions, it had been used during these periods at Elateia, too (cf. Fig. 6:2, LH III B–C after BÄCHLE 2003, 50). In the course of LH III C the broad-thin-broad pattern was applied more densely until the vessel was more or less entirely covered. In fact, even the shoulder decorations of stirrup jars were often reduced to a minimum (cf. Fig. 6:5,7) or edged out (Fig. 6:3–6,8) in order to emphasise the banded decoration.

According to A. Bächle who has studied a series of these vases (BÄCHLE 2003, 51–56) the typological sequence of the stirrup jars of Fig. 6 begins with T. XVI/A20 (Fig. 6:2. – BÄCHLE cat. no. 27: LH III B–C), and continues with T. VI/A9 (Fig. 6:1. – BÄCHLE 2003, cat. no. 15: LH III C Early), T. XXXVI/44x (Fig. 6:3. – BÄCHLE 2003, cat. no. 136: LH III C Early–Middle/Developed), T. LXII/18st and T. VI/A7+A8 (Fig. 6:4–5. – BÄCHLE 2003, cat. nos. 197, 14: LH III C Middle) and T. LIII/32a (Fig. 6:6. – BÄCHLE 2003, cat. no. 166: LH III C Advanced. For discussion of tall spouts see above, p. 139). – To these six vessels we add the two stirrup jars of LH III C Advanced to Late (Fig. 6:8) and LH III C Late (Fig. 6:7).

The decorative scheme of covering vases with successive groups of broad bands alternating with multiple thin lines was not confined to stirrup jars. It is also attested with the shapes of lekythos (Fig. 8:1), alabastron (Fig. 8:2 = BÄCHLE 2003, cat. no. 137) and amphoriskos (Fig. 8:3).

The same decorative system was used in other parts of the Mycenaean world, too. This does not come as much of a surprise, considering that the pattern was well rooted in the traditions of LH III A and III B. Moreover, from LH III C Early onwards a tendency towards covering a vase with successive broad-thin-broad groups of bands and lines can be observed in regions such as Attica (*RMDP*, figs. 220:443,445,447; 221:449), the Argolid (*RMDP*, figs. 45:344; 46:345,347), Achaia (PAPADOPOULOS 1978/79, figs. 70; 79. – PETROPOULOS this volume, fig. 15. – DEGER-JALKOTZY 2003, fig. 3:5. – DEGER-JALKOTZY – ALRAM-STERN 1985, 416, fig. 16:4; 421, fig. 19:4), Phocis (MÜLLER 1995, e.g. pls. 49:A54,58–59; 50:A60,62), Boeotia (*RMDP*, figs. 260:165; 261:178), Thessaly (*RMDP* 344:112–113,119), Rhodes (*RMDP*, e.g. figs. 430–432), Kos (*RMDP*, fig. 450:74–75), Skyros (PARLAMA 1984, figs. 51:57; 54:63; 57:69) and Kephallonia (SOUYOUDZOGLOU-HAYWOOD 1999, pl. 15:A1491,1346). However, in contrast to Elateia, vessels which were completely covered with successive groups of broad-thin-broad bands and lines were rare in other regions. There are only an amphoriskos from Kladeos/Trypes (*RMDP*, fig. 135:66), a

²⁷ In Achaia and Kephallonia these discs are completely monochrome, and the same applies to those of five stirrup jars from Perati (IAKOVIDIS 1969/70, vol. 2, 156, fig. 26:1).

straight-sided alabastron from Tiryns/Prophitis Elias (*RMDP*, fig. 43:331) and a few stirrup jars from Phocis (MÜLLER 1995, pl. 62:A205), Boeotia (*RMDP*, fig. 261:178) and Rhodes (BENZI 1992, pls. 9:d–e; 69:e,h. – *RMDP*, fig. 432:211). In many other regions the broad-thin-broad bandings often served as subsidiary ornament on vases decorated in the pleonastic style. In this function they were often combined with single broad lines, zones with linear pattern decoration, or monochrome zones with multiple thin reserved lines. – In contrast, in Achaia the decorative system of evenly spaced stripes of equal width prevailed.

In sum, the complete covering of a comparatively large number, as well as of a considerable variety of vessels with the broad-thin-broad banding system must be regarded as a specific feature of the pottery from Elateia. In LH III C Middle it reached a pinnacle which may have lasted into an early phase of LH III C Late. After that, it disintegrated and declined.

II.3. Local vases of “elaborate” decoration (Figs. 2:6; 3)

It has already been emphasised that the flamboyant decorative styles of LH III C Middle were not adopted at Elateia. Therefore the pottery from this site has a rather uninspired and dull appearance. However, this verdict does not apply to all vases from Elateia-Alonaki. Apart from the imports, there are a fair number of vessels which stand out by their more elaborate ornamentation of shoulder and body zones, as well as by the successful interplay of well-balanced shape and decoration. In the following a few examples will be presented.

T. XLIV/10ai (Fig. 3:1): The light ground decoration of this stirrup jar compares well with Sylvie Müller’s “Style de Médéon” vases from Phocis (cf. MÜLLER 1995, 273–276). The false mouth and the base carry the characteristic spiral motif already mentioned above, p. 139. Secondly, a diagonal cross is painted on the handles. Moreover, the body is decorated with various arrangements of bands and small zones with linear patterns (zigzag, chevrons), a system also found on several vases from Medeon (cf. MÜLLER 1995, pls. 50:A57; 67:A249–A250). Furthermore, the decoration of the shoulder combines the favourite motifs of the stirrup jars from Medeon, namely triangles of all kinds, concentric arcs and semicircles.

However, none of the stirrup jars published so far from Medeon can compare with the complex shoulder decoration of the vase from Elateia: The spout is flanked on both sides by an incurved triangle with angle-filling curves. The main facial side shows an elaborate triangle built of joining arcs and filled with curves and bars, and supplemented with concentric semicircles. The same syntax recurs on other stirrup jars from Elateia (see Fig. 3:2–3) so that T. XLIV/10ai may be viewed as a local product rather than an import from Phocis or elsewhere. The chronology is clearly LH III C Middle.

T. XLIX/16k (Fig. 3:2): The cylindrical form of this stirrup jar may well have been borrowed from the straight-sided alabastron, a shape which was well represented at Elateia (cf. BÄCHLE 2003, 38–42). The disc carries the “Medeon” spiral, and the syntax of the shoulder decoration resembles that of the stirrup jar mentioned above: The spout is flanked by slightly incurved stacked triangles and the main facial decoration consists of an elaborate triangle with angle-filling curves, isolated semicircles and a motif formed by concentric loops with solid central filling. This “almond” motif was a decorative element of the pleonastic styles of LH III C Middle: In Naxos it is found among the filling motifs between the octopus tentacles of octopus stirrup jars (cf. *RMDP*, 940, fig. 382b. – KARDARA 1977, fig. 3, pls. 11; 18; 23γ). Moreover, the famous outlined rosettes of the mature Close Style (cf. e.g. Fig. 1:3) and other copious decorative systems, too, were composed of “almonds”. However, in other cases “almonds” were used as main motifs of shoulder decorations, e.g. on stirrup jars of Phase II from Perati (IAKVIDIS 1969/70, vol. 2, 123, fig. 57:174,842. – See also *RMDP*, fig. 220:447).

On the whole, a date in LH III C Middle appears appropriate for the shape and the shoulder decoration of the vase from Elateia. More precisely the later part of the period, LH III C Middle/Advanced, is indicated by the monochrome paint of the cylindrical body interspaced with three reserved stripes of equal width: According to the chronological sequence of the Argolid, monochrome coating of vases with reserved bands and/or thin lines first occurs in LH III C Advanced when it is often found on the lower part of vases decorated in the Close Style or other pleonastic styles.²⁸ The pattern is continued in LH III C Late, but the spacing of the reserved lines becomes irregular. – It should be added that a date in LH III C Middle/Advanced of our stirrup vase harmonises well with that of the imported vase T. XLIX/16m (Fig. 1:1) found in the same tomb and in the same context (see above, p. 130).

T. XXXVIII/10d (Fig. 3:3): This vase was found together with the narrow-necked amphoriskos (or “two-handled jug”) of our Fig. 1:2 in the central pit in the chamber of Tomb XXXVIII/88. It is a beautiful specimen of FS 175. The ring base is raised, the slightly ovoid shape of the body is well balanced, and a moderately coned disc is set on top of a slim neck. The spout is not preserved, but the orientation of its lowest part suggests that it did not touch the false mouth. Handles and neck are monochrome, and the disc carries a densely coiled spiral. The body is monochrome except for a reserved band around the edge of the foot and for three reserved bands – each interspaced with two thin dark lines – placed between the shoulder and the belly zone. The adornment of the shoulders follows that of the two stirrup jars described above: The spout is flanked by slightly incurved stacked triangles, while the main facial side carries a complex triangle pattern filled with dots and concentric arcs and bars grouped around a large “almond”. Apart from this elaborate ornamentation, there is no other pattern decorated zone, neither at the outer edge of the shoulder nor on the belly of the vase. Thus the contrast between the copious adornment of the shoulder and the darkground decoration of the body lends a both austere and elegant appearance to the vase.

As for chronology, the vase should be assigned to LH III C Advanced. However, an overlap with the incipient phase of LH III C Late cannot be excluded.

T. XVI/A22 (Fig. 3:4): This vase has a ring base, the body is globular-conical and the shoulder is slightly sloping. The spout is equal in height with the wide, flat and slightly coned disc. This shaping of spout and false mouth is reminiscent of stately LH III C Middle vases from Rhodes (*RMDP*, 1044, figs. 432:209; 439:269) or from the Argolid (*RMDP*, figs. 44:340; 46:346). The decoration of the body is darkground with groups of small reserved lines. Above the belly there is a band filled with groups of chevrons. It may have been borrowed from the Close Style. The shoulder decoration consists of cross-hatched triangles flanking the spout and of antithetic horns linked with chevrons on the main decorative face. Antithetic horns were extremely popular in Rhodes, particularly in Ialysos (see the stirrup jars, amphoriskoi, straight-sided alabastra, jugs, strainer jugs and a stemmed skyphos [most of them LH III C Early–Developed] as presented in BENZI 1992, *passim*), while in other regions such as Attica, Euboea and the Cyclades the motif of antithetic streamers was preferred. However, there are stirrup jars from Thebes-Kolonaki which also carry shoulder decorations of antithetic horns and triangles, one of them in combination with a darkground decoration of the body (cf. *RMDP*, fig. 265:211 [LH III C Middle]; see also figs. 261:178 [LH III C Early];

²⁸ PODZUWEIT 1992. In Rhodes this decorative pattern is said to have started slightly earlier, in LH III C Early to Developed (*RMDP*, 988), but the synchronisation of this phase with LH III C Middle in the Mainland still remains problematic (*RMDP*, 985–988).

624:210 [LH III C Middle]). It may be remembered that we have already detected a connection between Elateia and Boeotia for the narrow-necked amphoriskos T. XXXVIII/9g (Fig. 1:2) (see above, p. 130), as well as in the case of vases with banded body decoration (see above, paragraph II.2). As for chronology, it is true that cross-hatched triangles were very popular LH III C Late. However, they already occurred on stirrup jars of LH III C Early–Middle/Developed in Ialysos (BENZI 1992, pl. 36e.g. – *RMDP*, fig. 433:218), and of LH III C Middle in the Argolid (*RMDP*, figs. 45:344; 46:347). Considering the general affinity of the vase to the stately vessels of other regions, it should be viewed as a candidate for LH III C Middle/Advanced.

T. XXI/A78 (Fig. 3:5): The false mouth of this vase still carries the “Medeon” spiral, the dark coating of the body is still evenly interspaced by multiple reserved lines, and the shoulder is decorated with five incurved triangles filled with FM 42 “patch”. The vase has a wide conical body, the shoulder is flat. A very close parallel of this vessel is provided by a stirrup jar from Perati (IAKOVIDIS 1969/70, vol. 2, fig. 57:1127) which is dated to Phase II, LH III C Middle. However, the spout of our vase is trumpet shaped and the false mouth has a high cone, features which are generally assigned to LH III C Late. On the whole, a date of LH III C Late seems adequate for this vase, but the regular spaced decoration of the body points to an early stage rather than to the later part of that period.

T. XV/A6 (Fig. 2:6): Although straight-sided alabastra are well attested in Elateia (BÄCHLE 2003, 34–42), the based type (“pyxis”, FM 97) is rare. The shape was very popular in the Dodecanese and on Naxos, but it is also attested in various regions of the Mainland such as Achaia (PETROPOULOS this volume), Skyros (PARLAMA 1984, fig. 52:59) and Perati (IAKOVIDIS 1969/70, vol. 2, fig. 79Δ–E). As we have already noted, the striped pyxis of Fig. 5:5 has a close parallel in Nikoleika in Achaia (cf. above, n. 25). Its shape is also very similar to that of the present vessel, except for the ring base of the latter. Moreover, in both cases the neck is monochrome and the handles are cross-barred. Otherwise the decoration of the banded vessel is common to the pottery produced at Elateia, while the ornamentation of the present vase seems to meet the desire for a more elaborate style. The decoration of the cylindrical body – joining concentric lozenges – recurs on the shoulder of an evenly striped straight-sided alabastron from Skyros (PARLAMA 1984, fig. 47:54). The shoulder is decorated with isolated concentric semicircles with solid centre and framed with dots, and the lower edge of the zone is framed with joining semicircles. The motif of the dotted isolated semicircles is attested on vases of LH III C Middle in Laconia (*RMDP*, fig. 98:220), Perati (*RMDP*, fig. 220:448) and on Naxos (*RMDP*, fig. 388:42). In LH III C Late it gained even more popularity. However, in view of the excellent quality of the shape and the decoration of this vase, and given the general chronology of the group to which it belonged (on niche Z of Tomb XV/86 see above, p. 135), there is no need to date it later than LH III C Middle.

To sum up, there is a fair number of burial vases from Elateia which may be aptly called “typical LH III C Middle” according to the terminology of P. Mountjoy (*MDP*, 169).

CONCLUSIONS

In order to understand and interpret the pottery assemblages of LH III C Middle from Elateia, the geographical situation of the site has to be considered. The upper valley of the Boeotian Kephissos formed a branch of the so-called “Great Isthmos Corridor” leading from the Corinthian Gulf to the Thermopylae and further north. Moreover, at the top of the Kephissos valley the main inland route to the north from Attica via Boeotia joined the “Isthmos Corridor”. Thus Elateia was situated at the main roads

which connected northern and southern Greece. Moreover, there is a route of communication which runs from the upper Kephissos valley via Kalapodi into East Locris, where Kynos and Mitrou controlled the coastal region and the sea routes across the northern gulf of Euboea.

Thus, situated on the main routes of the Mainland from north to south and from east to west, it comes as no surprise that Elateia received not only items of exchange from various directions, but also cultural influences. In particular, finds at Elateia of amber (EDER 2003), glass beads of similar composition to contemporary Italian glasses (NIKITA – HENDERSON 2006. – NIKITA – HENDERSON – NIGHTINGALE forthcoming) and Italic metal objects (DAKORONIA 2004) demonstrate that the people of Elateia were involved in the transportation of goods of transadriatic origin along the “Great Isthmos Corridor” route. Against this background, the stylistic affinities, as pointed out in this paper, between the pottery from Elateia with the ceramics of Achaia, Phocis, Boeotia, Thessaly and Skyros can be easily explained.²⁹ On the other hand, features shared with the ceramics of Rhodes and Naxos may have been transmitted along the route from Attica via Boeotia, or along the Euboean gulf and via the East Locris.³⁰ In a similar fashion, pottery imports from Achaia (including perhaps an octopus stirrup jar, cf. above, p. 131–132) and from Kynos were presumably brought by ways of direct contacts, while others such as the “Cretan” stirrup jars (if such, indeed, they were, cf. above, p. 132–133) and the Close Style stirrup jar (cf. above, p. 130) may have been obtained through intermediate exchange. Closer links with the pottery finds from Kalapodi are seemingly lacking. However, since the pottery finds from Kalapodi mainly consist of open shapes, this picture is likely to change when the remains of open shapes from the dromos fills of the Elateia tombs will be published.

A LOCAL STYLE OF LH III C MIDDLE?

Under these premises, decorative elements and shapes coming from various directions were blended at Elateia into what may be called a local style of LH III C Middle. A first description of its characteristics has been attempted in this paper. Some features such as reserved body zones of monochrome vases or multiple groups of reserved bands set in monochrome surfaces were common to all regions of the Mycenaean world from LH III C Advanced onwards. Others such as a certain predilection for the elaborate triangle motif or vessels covered with stripes (cf. above, paragraph II.2.1.) or broad-thin-broad banding (cf. above, paragraph II.2.2.) covering all the body were shared by the neighbouring regions of Phocis, Boeotia and Thessaly. There were also considerable resemblances to the pottery products of Skyros and of East Achaia. However, nowhere did the banded decorations extend to such a wide range of shapes. Moreover, there is no other site from which such a large amount of vases of this decorative system(s) have been published. On the other hand, the ceramics found at Elateia outnumber those published from the other regions of Central Greece. Therefore at present we prefer to think that we are dealing with a local variety of regional LH III C Middle style of Central Greece in general, rather than with a local style of the area of Elateia.

²⁹ Stylistic affinities with the pottery of the Ionian Islands, particularly of Kephallonia, made themselves felt during the later phases of LH III C Late rather than in LH III C Middle.

³⁰ G. Nightingale kindly reminded me of this alternative which will certainly become more apparent when the finds from Kynos and Mitrou will be published.

CHRONOLOGY

At the end of this paper it should be stressed again that with many closed vases from Elateia it is difficult to differentiate stylistically between LH III C Middle and LH III C Late. They often display features for which a first appearance in LH III C Middle/Advanced can be put forward, but which also continued in LH III C Late. On the other hand, in the case of banded vases the assignment to LH III C Middle often is quite clear. Moreover, there are a large number of vases which demonstrate what pottery of LH III C Late looked like, particularly during the later stretch of that period (cf. DAKORONIA – DEGER-JALKOTZY – FABRIZII-REUER 2002).

Thus the chronological development of the later pottery phases from Elateia resembles that of Achaia as presented by I. Moschos (cf. above, n. 17): LH III C Middle (= Developed–Advanced) – LH III C Advanced to III C Late – LH III C Late – LH III C Late to Submycenaean. The pottery presented in this paper comprises the phases LH III C Middle (Developed–Advanced) and LH III C Advanced to Late. It was contemporaneous with the transitional period of LH III C Advanced–Late in Achaia as defined by Aigeira II (DEGER-JALKOTZY 2003), the material from Nikoleika as shown by PETROPOULOS this volume and Phases 4 and 5 in the chronological scheme of I. Moschos.

At the beginning of the paper it has been stated that Elateia's time of greatest prosperity started in LH III C Middle. We may now finish with observing that the pinnacle of this development was reached during a phase which comprised the pottery phases of LH III C Advanced to Late. However, most remarkable is the continuation of this period of greatest prosperity beyond the end of the Mycenaean period and the transition to the Early Iron Age.

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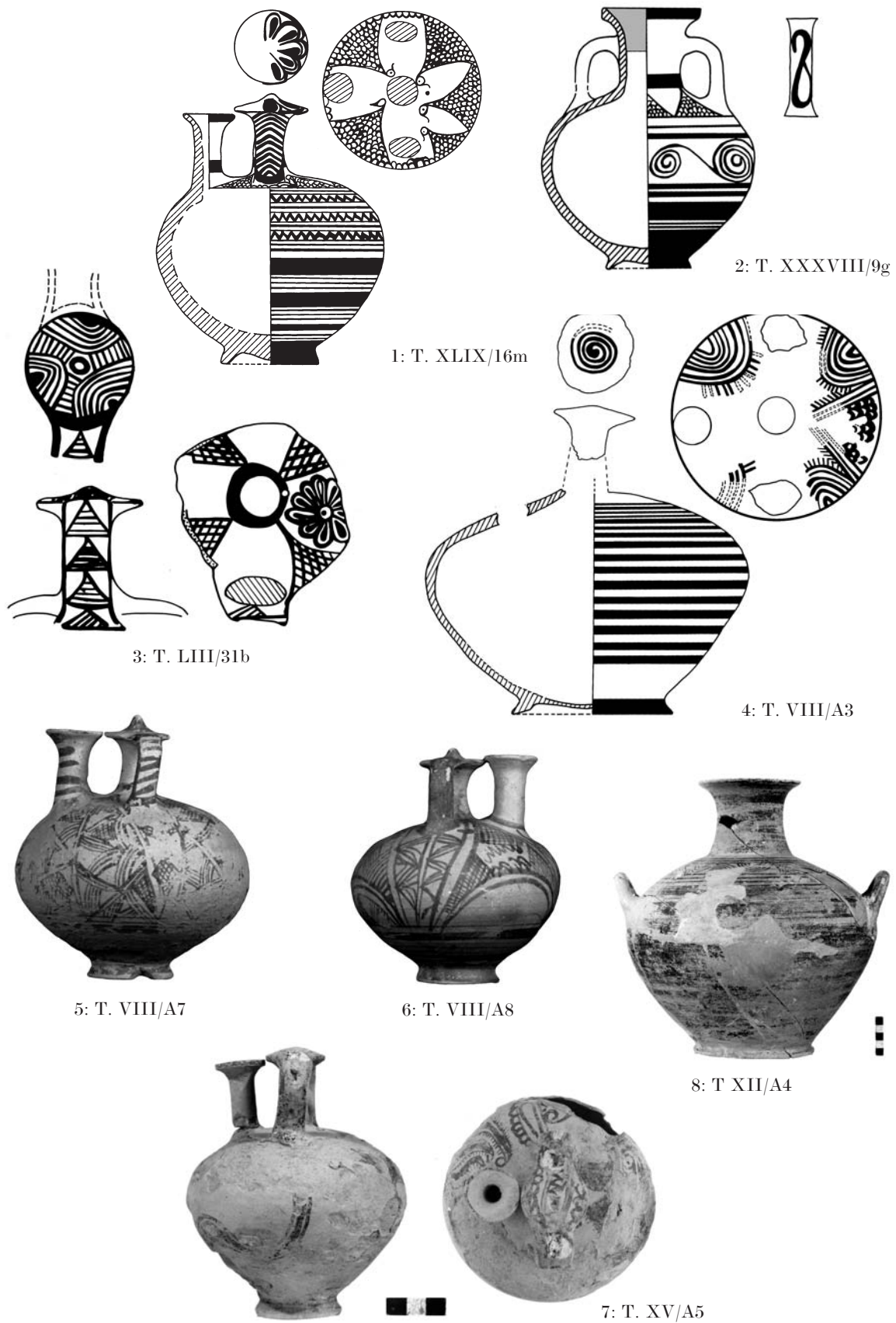
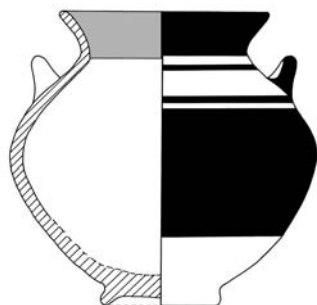
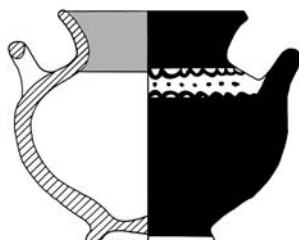


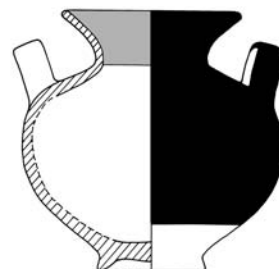
Fig. 1 Elateia: Imported vases of LH III C Middle and Late. Scale 1:3 (except nos. 7, 8)
(Drawings: B. Eder, E. Held. Ink drawings: E. Held. Photographs: St. Alexandrou, E. Held)



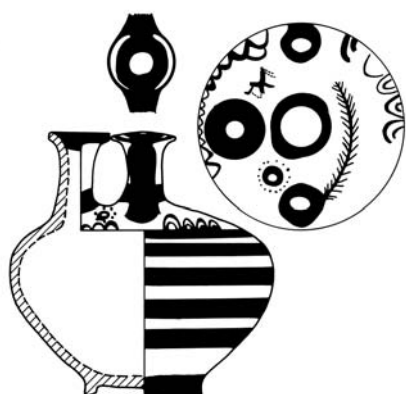
1: T. XV/A1



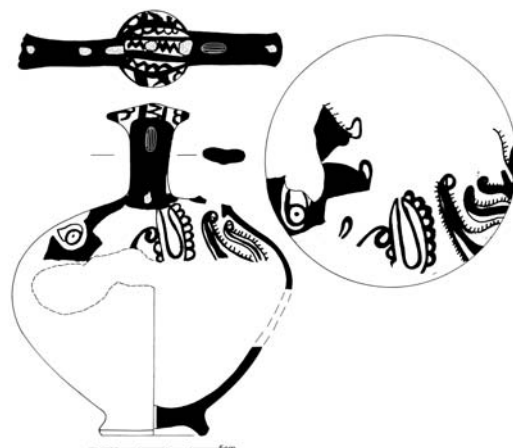
2: T. XV/A2



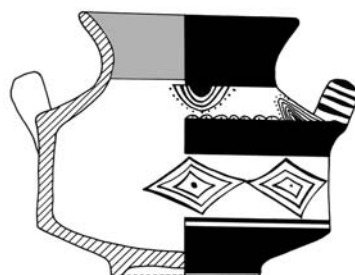
3: T. XV/A3



4: T. XV/A4



5: T. XV/A5



6: T. XV/A6

Fig. 2 Elateia, Tomb XV/86: Vases from dromos niche Z. Scale 1:3
(Drawings: B. Eder, E. Held. Ink drawings: E. Held)



1: T. XLIV/10ai



2: T. XLIX/16k



3: T. XXXVIII/10d

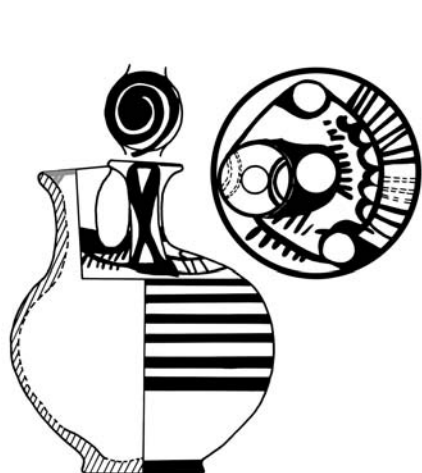


4: T. XVI/A22



5: T. XXI/A78

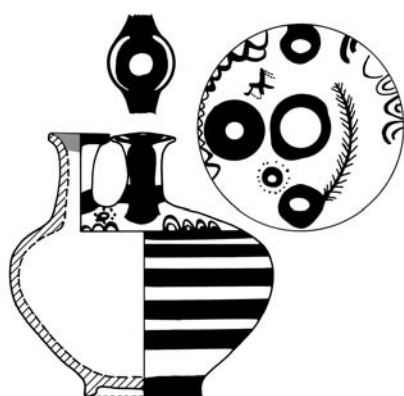
Fig. 3 Elateia, LH III C Middle and Late: Stirrup jars with elaborate decoration. Scale 1:3
(Drawings: B. Eder, E. Held. Ink drawings: E. Held)



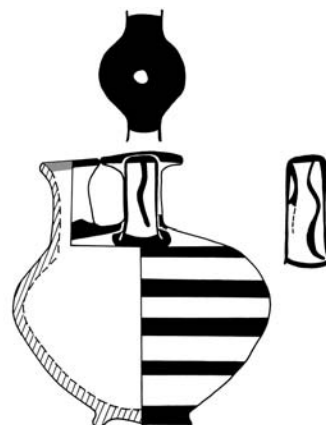
1: T. XXIV/23v



2: T. LVI/23ka



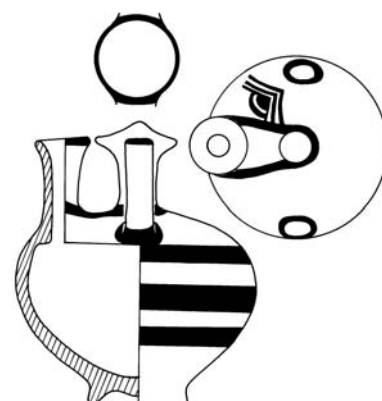
3: T. XV/A4



4: T. VI/A3



5: T. XI/A2



6: T. VIII/A4+A11

Fig. 4 Elateia: Stirrup jars decorated with evenly spaced stripes. Scale 1:3
(Drawings: B. Eder, E. Held. Ink drawings: E. Held)

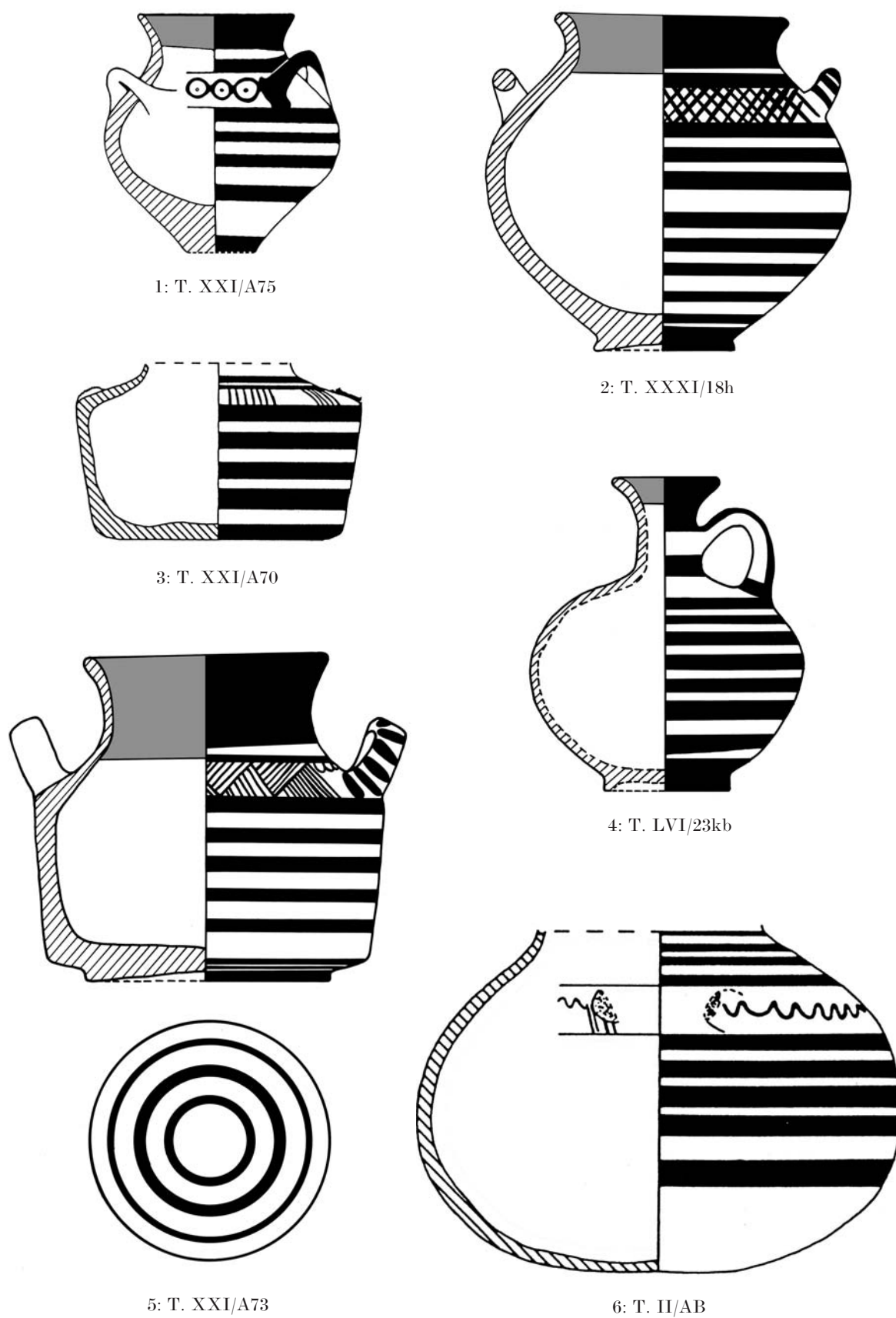


Fig. 5 Elateia: Various vases decorated with evenly spaced stripes. Scale 1:2
(Drawings: B. Eder, E. Held. Ink drawings: E. Held)

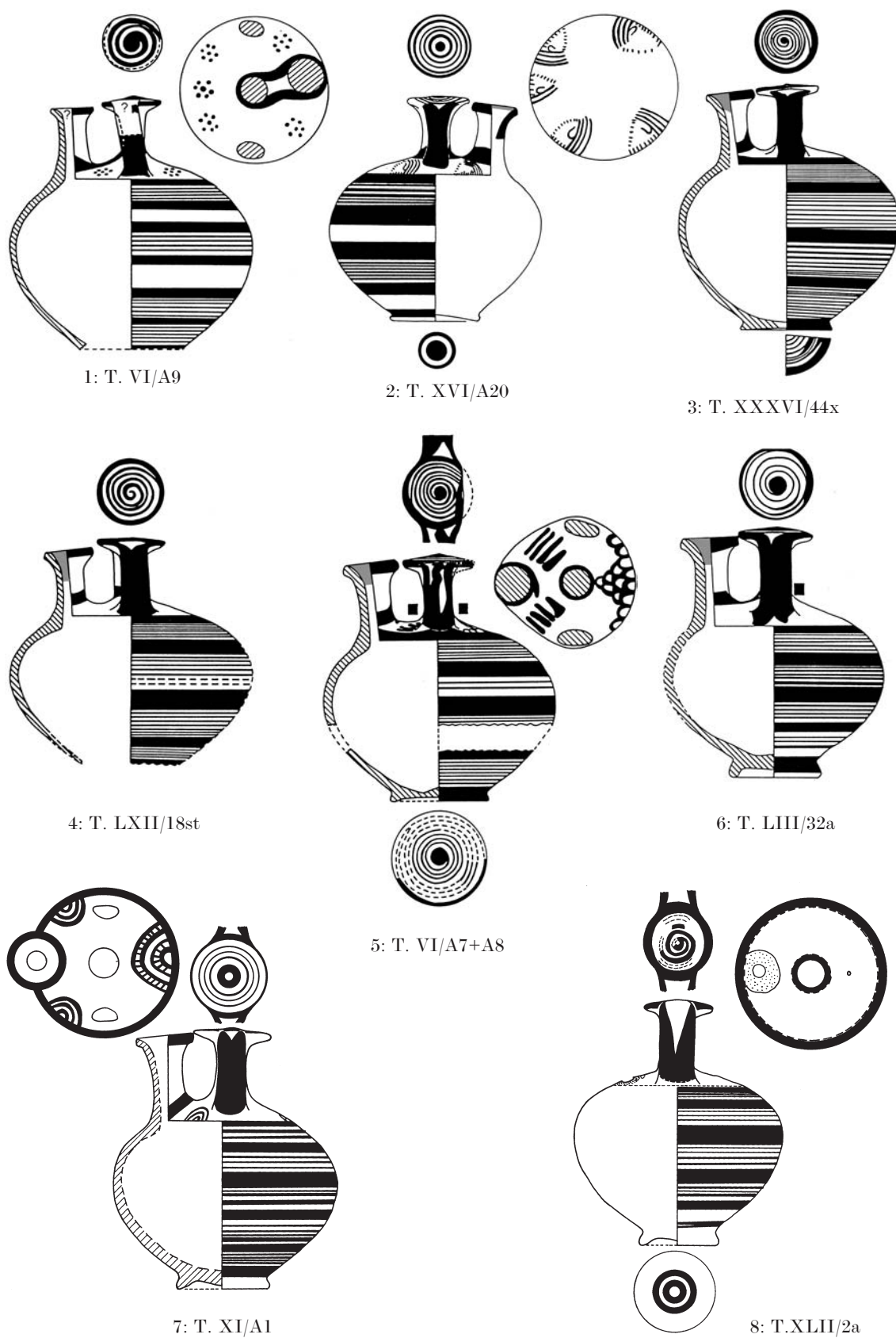
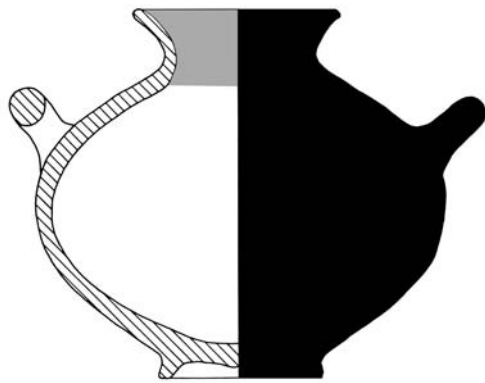
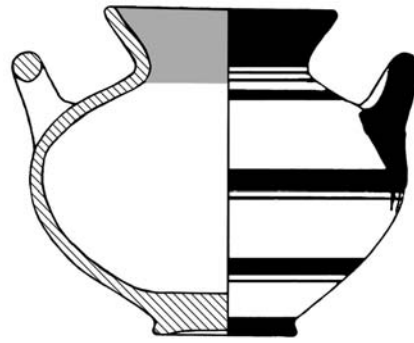


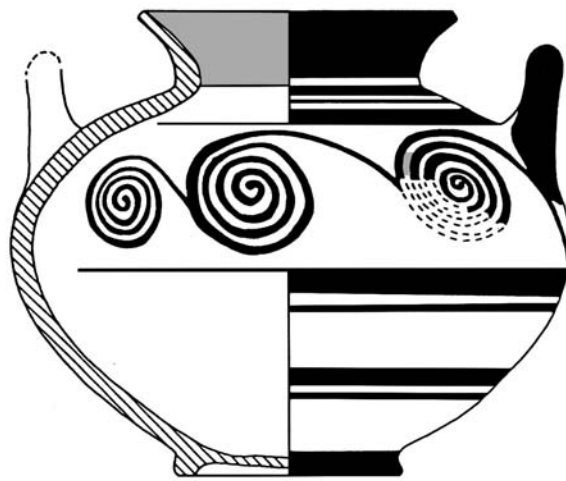
Fig. 6 Elateia, LH III C: Banded stirrup jars. Scale 1:3
(Drawings: B. Eder, E. Held. Ink drawings: E. Held)



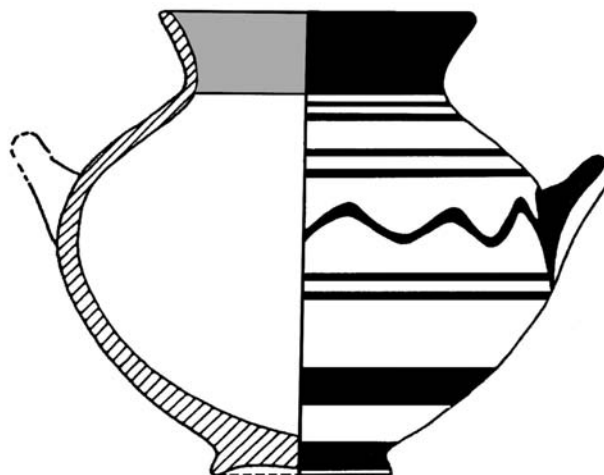
1: T. XXVIII/33eta



2: T. XXI/A89



3: T. XII/AB



4: T. XXIV/23t

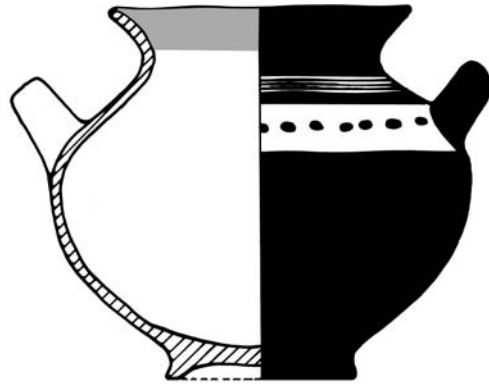
Fig. 7 Elateia, LH III C Middle: Amphoriskos FS 59. Scale 1:2
(Drawings: A. Bächle, B. Eder, E. Held. Ink drawings: A. Bächle, E. Held)



Fig. 8 Elateia, LH III C Middle-Advanced: Lekythos, alabastron, amphoriskos. Scale 1:2
(Drawings: B. Eder, E. Held. Ink drawings: E. Held)



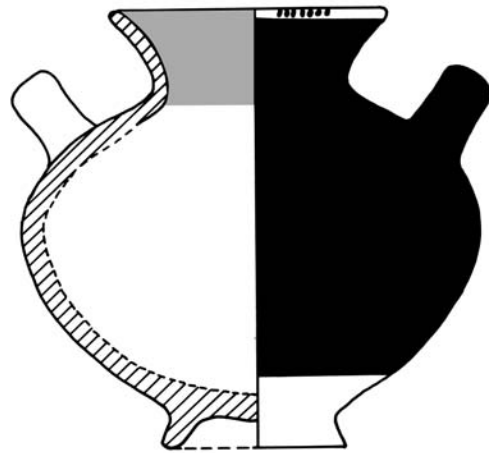
1: T. XXIV/23g



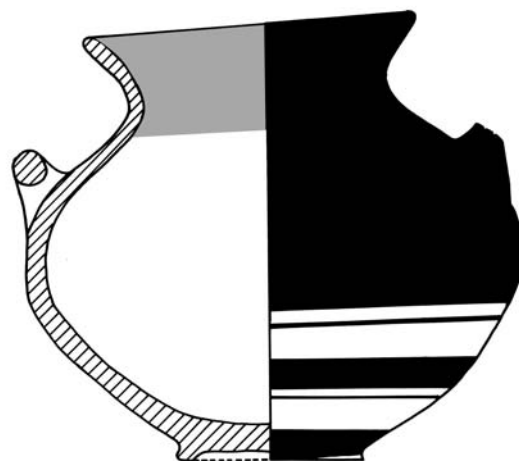
2: T. XXXVI/38b



3: T. XXXIII/9a+12b



4: T. XXXVI/38e



5: T. XXIV/23u

Fig. 9 Elateia, LH III C: Monochrome amphoriskoi. Scale 1:2
(Drawings: B. Eder, E. Held. Ink drawings: E. Held)

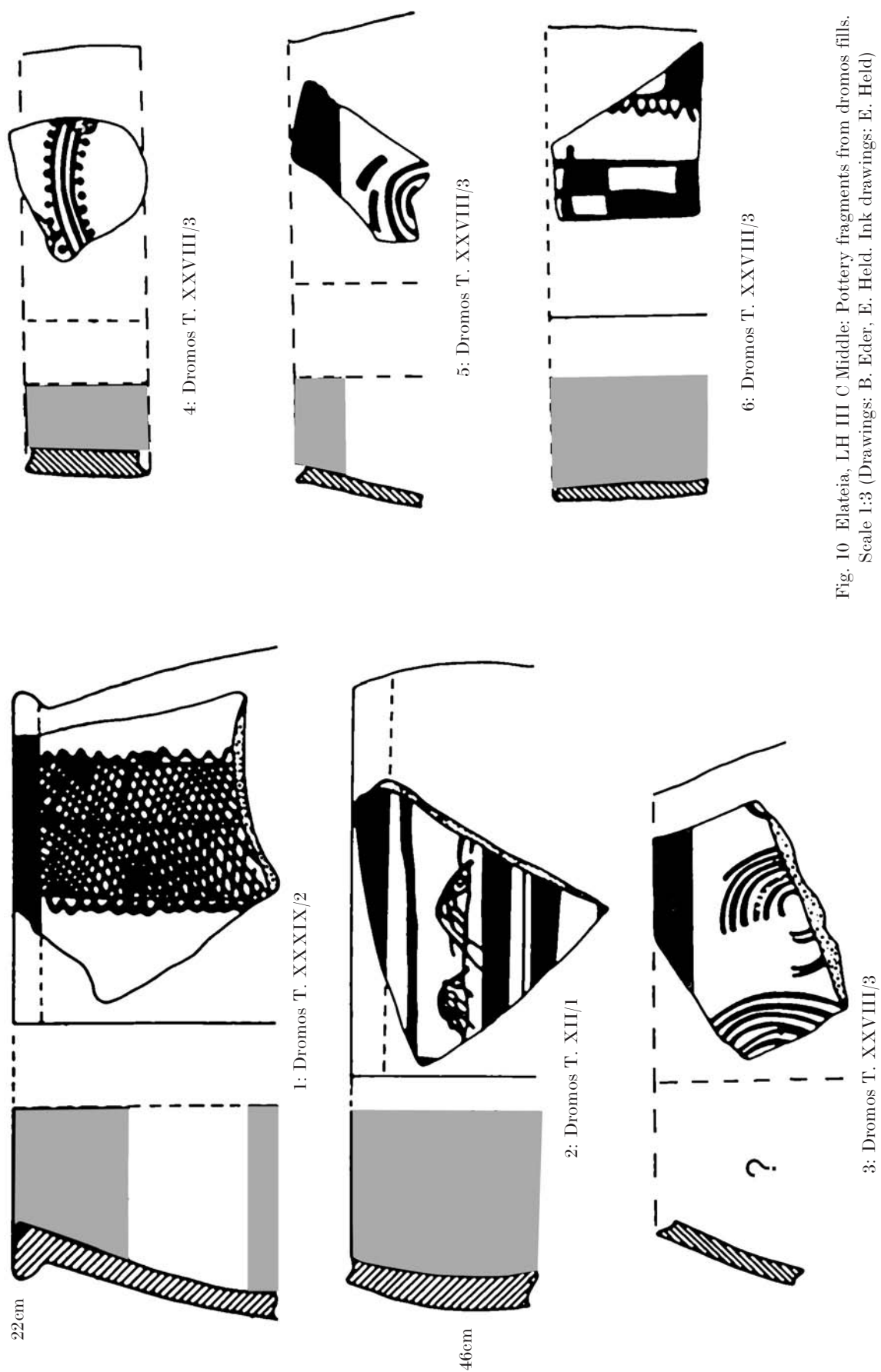


Fig. 10 Elateia, LH III C Middle: Pottery fragments from dromos fills.
Scale 1:3 (Drawings: B. Eder, E. Held. Ink drawings: E. Held)



Fig. 11 Elateia, T. VI/86: Fragments of a LH III C Middle crater from the dromos fill.
D. (rim) ca. 50 cm (Photograph: A. Bächle)